

Harsh winter damage

Bridge in need of repairs

BY SUSANNA SHEEHAN CLIPPER STAFF

The record winter of 2015 has taken a toll on the Powder Point Bridge. Ice in the bay has damaged some of the fiberglass jackets that wrap around hundreds of pilings supporting the 27-yearold bridge.

According to Department of Public Works director Peter Buttkus, the problems on the bridge pilings were discovered around two weeks ago. He said he suspects it was the severe ice flow in the bay this winter that damaged the piling repairs.

The repairs to 211 of the bridge's 550 piles were completed last summer at a cost of \$2.4 million. The deteriorated piles were wrapped with fiber

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glass jackets and then filled with high strength grout.

Buttkus, who has seen the damage first hand, said that some of the fiberglass wrap is split; others have superficial delamination.

"Some are minor in nature," he said. "A couple of the ones I saw have to be totally rewrapped."

The repair work is under warranty and Buttkus said both the installer, C. White Marine, and the manufacturer of the fiberglass wrap, QuakeWrap Inc., have been out to inspect the piles. "They did a full inspection from end to end last week by boat and on foot," Buttkus said. "We're waiting to hear back from them as to what happened. What has to be determined is how did those crack. Was it product failure? Was it a problem in the application when it went on?"

He said the fiberglass jacket manufacturer removed one of the coverings and sent it to a laboratory in California to be tested. Buttkus said he does not know yet how many piles have been damaged: "At this point, I've seen a handful but as to the exact number, I have no idea. I hope it's a small percentage."

According to Buttkus, there was no damage to the 12 piles that underwent emergency repairs in 2013 after the state discovered some piles that were so deteriorated that it closed the bridge to vehicles the year before. Those repairs cost \$250,000. Buttkus expects a full report on the problem to be ready some time this week.

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